

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 8, 2002

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *ps*

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 16 PARK ALEXANDRIA (MAYOR DONLEY'S REQUEST)

This memorandum is in response to Mayor Donley's request for information regarding the Park Alexandria program.

Park Alexandria was established by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce in December 1993 and is designed to encourage visitors who will be in Old Town for more than two hours to park in any of nine conveniently located garages and lots. Participating merchants offer up to \$2.00 off the parking fees for their patrons who park in the designated locations. The program was designed to help alleviate parking problems in the immediate Old Town area.

Merchants can purchase tickets in blocks of 100 from SunTrust Bank and give them to customers one or two at a time. The Chamber has circulated guidelines suggesting the issuance of one \$1.00 ticket in exchange for the first \$25 spent with the merchant, and a second \$1.00 ticket for sales of \$40 or more. This program is administered by the Chamber and SunTrust bank at no cost to the merchants, except a \$1.00 per ticket price (purchased in blocks of 100 tickets).

In September 1999, the program had 25 participating shops and restaurants in the Old Town area. Currently, according to the Chamber of Commerce, there are only approximately three or four merchants actively participating. In the summer of 2001, the Chamber voted to revive the task force that facilitated this program. Due to the uncertainty of the economy last fall, the revival has been slow in coming, but the Chamber now indicates it is committed to the program.

The next scheduled meeting of this task force is April 18 at 8:30 a.m. at the Chamber. Office of Management and Budget staff will be in attendance. An update will be prepared after that meeting and will be distributed to Council. The update will include the concrete steps that the Chamber will take to rejuvenate the program. These steps might include an aggressive advertising campaign, the publication and marketing of participating garages, signs in these garages which publicize the program, and a campaign to increase Old Town retailers participation in the program.

Staff: Carol Moore, Acting Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget
Gene Swearingen, Director, Office of Management and Budget

cc: Ken Moore, President & CEO, Alexandria Chamber of Commerce